



Testimony of Eric Brown on behalf of
The Connecticut Business and Industry Association
and
The Connecticut Manufacturers' Collaborative
before the
COMMERCE COMMITTEE
March 9, 2021



Good morning distinguished leaders and members of the Commerce Committee. My name is Eric Brown and I serve as vice president of manufacturing policy and outreach at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents thousands of mostly small businesses throughout Connecticut, including nearly 1,000 small and mid-sized manufacturing businesses. I also work closely with the Connecticut Manufacturers Coalition (CMC)¹.

CBIA and the CMC are aligned in their strong support for:

Raised Bill No. 1021 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY WORKING GROUP.

First let me thank the committee for raising what is in our view, despite its unassuming name, a critical bill for the future of manufacturing in the State of Connecticut.

CMC Roadmap

When Connecticut's manufacturing community first came together nearly three years ago under the CMC, its first order of business was to assemble for the new Governor and the new legislature, a roadmap of strategic priorities that manufacturers themselves saw as critical for the manufacturing future of Connecticut.

The highest of those priorities called for the placement of an experienced manufacturing professional into the administration. This committee spearheaded a determined and successful effort in 2019 to create the position of Chief Manufacturing Officer (CMO).

The CMC roadmap also includes many initiatives related to education and workforce training. As noted below, the Office of Workforce Strategy and the Governor's Workforce Council are making excellent progress toward addressing this priority.

The third major pillar of the CMC roadmap concerns technology.

Technology – the Challenge

¹ The CMC is comprised of the major manufacturing associations in Connecticut (Aerospace Components Manufacturers, CT Business and Industry Association & Affiliates, CT Tooling & Machining Association, Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance, ManufacturingCT, New England Spring & Metalstamping Association, Smaller Manufacturers Association. Its mission is *"to provide a manufacturing-lead forum for identifying statewide, high-priority manufacturing needs, developing and implementing strategic initiatives to address those needs, and to be the primary private-sector partner for policymakers with respect to statewide manufacturing policies."*



With the emergence of the fourth industrial revolution, commonly referred to as Industry 4.0 or “I4.0”, it is imperative for Connecticut’s small and midsize manufacturers to:

- (a) have access to the expertise to help them develop and implement a cost-effective, I4.0 and advanced technology strategic plans;
- (b) a logical, accessible, collaborative and coordinated network of technology resources to support their innovation needs with respect to both product design and production capability using I4.0 and other advanced technologies; and
- (c) have efficient and cost-effective opportunities to upskill existing employees and access qualified new employees capable of operating and maintaining I4.0 and other advanced technologies.

With respect to (c), this committee, the General Assembly at large, the administration, and the Governor’s Workforce Council are working effectively and feverishly with a wide variety of stakeholders to create a vertically integrated, K thru college, strategic technical career educational ecosystem for our state. An essential and existential need that must succeed.

With respect to (a) and (b), however, additional immediate action is required.

Connecticut is fortunate to have many public, private and non-profit technology resource institutions investing heavily to expand their capabilities to serve manufacturers with their transition to an I4.0 manufacturing economy.

Unfortunately, the state and these institutions themselves lack a strategic, collaborative, coordinated and cost-efficient system for building a technology services ecosystem that is logical and accessible to the broad community of small and midsize manufacturers in Connecticut. Further, many of these entities are funded through federal grants in a manner that promotes competition, rather than strategic collaboration.

Consequently, small and midsize manufacturers are left trying to understand and navigate a highly fragmented, internally competitive marketplace of technology providers, ultimately leaving them confused and frustrated, and thereby ultimately disincentivized to invest in technology innovation.

The Solution

Raised Bill No.1021 proposes a working group of key stakeholders, comprised significantly of small and midsize manufacturers, along with key advanced technology service providers. The goal of the working group is to expeditiously untangle the current maelstrom of I4.0 and advanced technology resources and create a coordinated, strategic, statewide and customer-focused technology ecosystem that will simplify,

amplify and accelerate the deployment of these technologies within Connecticut's manufacturing community.

Specifically, the Working Group will compile comprehensive profiles for all entities that receive state funding for providing I4.0 and other advanced manufacturing services to manufacturers. The Working Group will then conduct analyses, including value-stream mapping, to identify duplication of services, service gaps and systemic inefficiencies, along with barriers and recommendations to successfully addressing the challenges outlined above. The Working Group shall report on its progress to this committee by March 15, 2022 and submit a final strategic plan by Oct. 1, 2022. The Working Group shall terminate upon submission of the final strategic plan, unless otherwise reauthorized by the General Assembly.

Specific recommendations on the language of LCO #4355:

With respect to Section 1(d), lines 39 and 40, we offer the following clarifying modification to the language:

- 39 matters relating to commerce, the chief manufacturing officers, ~~or~~
- 40 representatives of entities described in subdivision (1) of subsection (c)

Thank you again for raising Raised Bill No. 1021, for your continued and steadfast interest in helping to build and maintain a world-class manufacturing economy in Connecticut, and for this opportunity to provide comment on this bill.